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A MIXED BAG FOR TENNESSEE FARMERS IN 2000

The 2000 crop year was a roller coaster ride for many Tennessee farmers. Most areas of the State reported ideal temperatures and adequate rainfall during the first half of the growing season, but conditions quickly turned hot and dry in late summer. This dry spell dominated the latter part of the growing season, and had the biggest impact on the State's soybean crop. Based on a recent survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, the average Tennessee soybean yield for 2000 is estimated at 25 bushels per acre, 5 bushels below the State's five-year average, but 6 bushels above the extremely poor crop of 1999. Farmers reported that their double-cropped beans were negatively affected by the dry weather and an early October freeze, and this was the main reason for the overall below average yields. On the other hand, the State's corn, tobacco, and cotton crops yielded fairly well in 2000. A significant number of acres had reached maturity before the dry conditions set in, or they received just enough timely rainfall to ensure a good overall crop. Survey results showed a final State corn yield of 114 bushels per acre, 12 bushels above last year's final yield and the highest yield in the State since 1996. Cotton and tobacco growers also reported having a fairly good year in 2000. Burley producers reported a final yield of 1,930 pounds per acre, the highest yield in the State since 1994 but slightly below earlier expectations due to poor curing conditions in October. The final cotton yield is estimated at 607 pounds of lint per acre, well above the 1999 final yield of 505 pounds per acre and the highest yield in the State since 1997. It appears that the Boll Weevil Eradication program also had a positive affect on Tennessee's cotton yields.

SOYBEAN YIELDS ONCE AGAIN BELOW STATE AVERAGE

It was rough year for Tennessee soybean producers as hot and dry conditions once again took a toll on the crop. In addition to the dry weather, an early freeze during the second week of October shut down double-cropped soybeans and prevented them from reaching their full potential. Farmers also reported that many of these late beans were of poor quality. Producers planted 1.18 million acres in 2000, compared to 1.25 million in 1999. From the total acreage, 1.15 million acres were harvested for beans with an average yield of 25 bushels per acre. Total production, at 28.8 million bushels, is 26 percent more than was produced in 1999.

COTTON PRODUCTION UP 20 PERCENT FROM A YEAR AGO

Tennessee cotton producers harvested the same amount of acreage as in 1999, but much better yields in 2000 led to a 20 percent increase in total production. Growers averaged 607 pounds of lint per acre, up 102 pounds from 1999. Total production from the 565,000 harvested acres is estimated at 715,000 bales, the highest production in the State since 1995. Most growers were able to get their crop planted on time this year, despite some wet field conditions early on. Insect pressure remained in-check all year, and the crop had good growing conditions throughout much of the Spring and early Summer. The hot, dry conditions of August adversely impacted the crop, but damage was not as severe as last year. Harvest ran nearly three weeks ahead of normal due to favorable conditions during October.

GOOD YEAR FOR MOST TENNESSEE CORN PRODUCERS

The 2000 corn crop was much better than the one produced a year ago, but many growers still had their share of problems. The best corn was grown in the northwest corner of the State and in the extreme southern part of Middle Tennessee. The crop in these locations was planted early and received plenty of moisture during the critical pollination stage. It was a different story in parts of upper Middle Tennessee, where extremely dry conditions prevented the crop from reaching it's full potential. The final State corn yield of 114 bushels per acre was a 12 bushel improvement over 1999 and the highest yield since 1996. Growers planted 650,000 acres and harvested 590,000 acres for grain and 55,000 for silage. Total grain production of 67.3 million bushels is nearly 16 percent more than was produced a year earlier.

(Over)

TOBACCO TAKES ADVANTAGE OF TIMELY RAINS

Tobacco grown in the major producing regions of Tennessee received just enough timely rainfall this year to ensure better than average yields. Typical problems with black shank and blue mold were reported, but the dry summer weather seems to have kept these diseases under control with only the lower leaves affected in many cases. The dry conditions during October made stripping difficult, but growers managed their crops well and very few producers reported any major problems. Due to the reduction in quota, burley acreage declined 12,000 acres from 1999 to 43,000 acres harvested. Growers averaged 1,930 pounds per acre, compared to 1,890 pounds in 1999. This led to a total production of 83.0 million pounds, 20 percent below the year earlier. Tennessee’s dark-fired tobacco yields are estimated at 2,500 pounds for Type 22, Eastern Dark-Fired, and a record 3,000 pounds for Type 23, Western Dark-Fired. Type 35, Dark Air-Cured also set a new State yield record at 2,200 pounds per acre.

GOOD SPRING WEATHER LEADS TO RECORD HAY YIELDS

It was an excellent year for cutting hay in Tennessee, especially during the Spring and early summer. Most growers were able to get two good cuttings before the dry weather set in, and some even got a third cutting in the fall. Total hay production, at 4.73 million tons, was 25 percent greater than the 1999 total and a new State record. Alfalfa producers harvested 35,000 acres, averaging a record 3.70 tons per acre, while those harvesting grain and grass hay averaged 2.30 tons per acre, also a new State record. On December 1, farmers estimated that 3.40 million tons remained in storage. Producers also seeded 8,000 acres of new alfalfa during 2000.

PRODUCERS STRUGGLE TO GET THE 2001 WINTER WHEAT CROP SEEDED

Wheat seedings began on schedule in early October, but the dry weather caused germination problems in the earliest sown fields, and caused many producers to hold off on additional planting. Weather during November and December continued to hamper seedings, and as a result, some farmers were unable to seed all of their intended acreage. Total wheat acreage for 2001 is forecast at 520,000 acres, 30,000 acres below last year’s level.

Crop Estimates: Tennessee and United States, Final 2000, with Comparisons

Crop	Unit	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
TENNESSEE							
Apples	lb.	—	—	—	—	9,500	9,000
Corn for grain	bu.	570	590	102	114	58,140	67,260
Cotton ¹	lb.	565	565	505	607	595	715
Hay, All	ton	1,880	2,035	2.02	2.32	3,793	4,730
Alfalfa	ton	30	35	3.10	3.70	93	130
All Other	ton	1,850	2,000	2.00	2.30	3,700	4,600
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	3,100	2,000
Soybeans	bu.	1,200	1,150	19	25	22,800	28,750
Tobacco, All	lb.	63.17	51.92	1,941	2,030	122,601	105,398
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	7.00	7.60	2,280	2,500	15,960	19,000
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	0.57	0.63	2,500	3,000	1,425	1,890
Burley (31)	lb.	55.00	43.00	1,890	1,930	103,950	82,990
One-sucker (35)	lb.	0.60	0.69	2,110	2,200	1,266	1,518
Winter Wheat	bu.	340	380	56.0	55.0	19,040	20,900
UNITED STATES							
Apples	lb.	—	---	---	---	10,579,600	10,677,100
Corn for grain	bu.	70,487	72,732	133.8	137.1	9,430,612	9,968,358
Cotton ¹	lb.	13,424.9	13,097.5	607	631	16,968.0	17,219.5
Hay, All	ton	63,220	59,854	2.53	2.54	159,707	152,183
Alfalfa	ton	24,055	23,077	3.51	3.48	84,385	80,347
All Other	ton	39,165	36,777	1.92	1.95	75,322	71,836
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	2,525,400	2,677,100
Soybeans	bu.	72,446	72,718	36.6	38.1	2,653,758	2,769,665
Tobacco, All	lb.	647.2	485.7	1,997	2,264	1,292,692	1,099,884
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	10.75	11.70	2,304	2,640	24,773	30,890
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	4.07	4.43	2,612	3,214	10,630	14,240
Burley (31)	lb.	303.60	198.40	1,829	2,023	555,185	401,352
One-sucker (35)	lb.	3.45	3.79	2,325	2,609	8,021	9,888
Winter Wheat	bu.	35,486	35,022	47.8	44.6	1,696,580	1,562,733

¹ Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton.